

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. IX.]

TORONTO, JULY 20, 1889.

[No. 15.

THE REFORMER AND THE POPE'S INDULGENCES.

To gain money for the edification of the mighty city of St. Peter's, Pope Leo X sent forth indulgence-sellers across the world to extort alike from rich and peasant, by the sale of licenses to sin, the money required for his vain and ambitious purpose. One of the most shameless of these indulgence-sellers, the Dominican monk, John Tetzel, found his way to the quiet villages and cities of central Germany. In the pomp and state of an archbishop he traversed the country, carrying up his great red hat and pulpit in the market-places, he offered his wares with the effrontery of a mountebank and the skill of a salesman, to which he added the most frightful promises. "This cross," he would say, pointing to a small standard, "has as much efficacy as the very cross of Christ. There is no sin so great that an indulgence cannot remit; only the sinner pay well, and all will be forgiven."

Even the release of a soul from purgatory could be purchased by money. And he sought to wring the hearts of his hearers by appealing to their human affections:

"Priest! noble! merchant! wife! youth! man! do you not hear the parents and friends of the dead cry from the bottomless abyss, 'We are suffering horrible tortures; a trifling alms will release us; you can give it; you will not!'"

As the people shuddered

at these words, the brazen impostor went on: "At every instant that the money rattles at the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory and flies to heaven." There was a graded price for the pardon of every sin, past or future, from the venial to the most heinous—even those of



LUTHER NAILING UP THE THESES.

nameless shame. The honest soul of Luther was roused to indignation by these impieties. "If God permit, I will make a hole in Tetzel's drum," he said. He denied the efficacy of the Pope's indulgences, declaring, "except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." But still the delusion spread.

reach her sooner than if sent through a friend; and perhaps it might save a tear." Would that every boy and girl were equally saving of a mother's tears.

The great duty of life is not to give pain.

The traffic in licenses to sin thrived apace. The brave Reformer took his resolve. He would protest in the name of God against the flagrant iniquity. At noon on the day before the Feast of All Saints, when whoso visited the Wittenberg church was promised a plenary pardon, he walked boldly up and nailed upon the door a paper containing the famous ninety-five theses against the doctrine of indulgences. The first of these, which gives the keynote of the whole, reads thus: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says 'Repent,' He means that the whole life of believers upon earth should be a constant and perpetual repentance." This 31st of October, 1517, was the epoch of the Reformation. The sounds of the hammer that nailed this bold protest to the church door echoed throughout Europe, and shook the papal throne. Thus was hurled down the gauntlet of defiance to the spiritual tyranny of Rome. The theses created a prodigious sensation.

SAVE A MOTHER'S TEARS.

Two friends were once sitting together, engaged in letter-writing. One was a young man from India, and the other's family resided in that far off land. The former was writing to his mother in India. When his letter was finished, his friend offered to enclose it in his. This he politely declined, saying, "If it be sent separately, it will